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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Letter dated 31 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed herewith, the declaration adopted at the close of the first specialized meeting on child trafficking in West and Central Africa, held at Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, from 8 to 10 January 2002.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the United Nations General Assembly under agenda item 115.

(*Signed*) Philippe D. **Djangoné-Bi**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 31 January 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

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Yamoussoukro Declaration on child trafficking and exploitation in West and Central Africa

Adopted at the close of the first specialized meeting on child trafficking in West and Central Africa (8 to 10 January 2002, Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire)

The Minister for Families, Women and Children of Côte d'Ivoire, the Minister for Families, Social Welfare and Solidarity of Benin, the Minister for Social Action and National Solidarity of Burkina Faso, the Minister for the Advancement of Women, Children and Families of Mali, delegates from West and Central African States, and representatives of the following international organizations: the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Office/International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme/Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP/UNDCP), representatives of the German, French and Italian bilateral cooperation agencies, representatives of civil society and non-governmental organizations,

Gathered at Yamoussoukro from 8 to 10 January 2002 for the first specialized meeting on child trafficking and exploitation in West and Central Africa, under the high patronage and with the active participation of His Excellency Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and organized jointly by the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and Interpol,

Aware that the emergence and development of the phenomenon of child trafficking and exploitation in all its forms and for whatever purpose constitutes a new form of crime,

Aware of the serious traumas that affect child victims of trafficking and their families,

Mindful that many West and Central African States have inadequate legislation, ill-suited to provide specific protection for children against trafficking and its consequences,

Mindful that the phenomenon of child trafficking results mainly from the poverty of their population,

Concerned at the exploitation, abuse and sometimes inhuman treatment of all child victims of trafficking in their respective countries,

Concerned at some countries' failure to ratify and delay in implementing regional and international instruments for the protection of the rights of children, including International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour,

Convinced of the necessity of providing training to personnel of the security forces, the judiciary and all actors in the area of child protection,

Convinced that children are the builders of tomorrow's nations and the bearers of hope for the future,

Recognizing the importance of the role of Interpol in combating transnational crime in general and child trafficking in particular,

Recognizing the importance of the role of non-governmental organizations in the protection, care and rehabilitation of child victims of trafficking,

Noting the urgency of adopting regional initiatives for the well-being of children,

1. Undertake to conduct synchronized campaigns to raise public awareness of the dangers to which children are exposed;

2. Undertake to establish rehabilitation and educational programmes to promote the reintegration of children in their communities;

3. Agree to adopt, amend and harmonize existing national legislation to combat child trafficking and exploitation;

4. Undertake to work towards the prompt ratification of international instruments for the benefit of children;

5. Request all States to take all necessary measures for the implementation and enforcement of these instruments;

6. Invite Governments and development partners to incorporate in their national poverty eradication programmes a section on the protection and promotion of the rights of children;

7. Propose that States introduce an official travel document allowing the free movement of children;

8. Agree to incorporate or strengthen programmes to train personnel of the security forces, the judiciary and all actors in the protection of children and the promotion of their rights;

9. Encourage States to establish a national database containing disaggregated criminal data on child trafficking and exploitation with the support of organizations specializing in the field, including Interpol, UNICEF, IOM, ILO/IPEC and UNDCP/ODCCP;

10. Undertake to promote exchanges of criminal intelligence and information concerning child trafficking and exploitation between the national and international agencies responsible for suppression and law enforcement;

11. Undertake to collaborate closely with non-governmental organizations and all actors working for the protection and, specifically, the rehabilitation of child victims of trafficking by ensuring swift repatriation procedures and by providing substantial support;

12. Agree on the importance of signing a subregional agreement involving all West and Central African countries in combating child trafficking and exploitation;

13. Agree on the need to establish in each State committees to combat child trafficking and exploitation;

14. Agree to establish a biennial rotating meeting of ministers on child trafficking and exploitation with a preparatory meeting of experts to be held in the host country;

15. Entrust the host country of the next meeting and Interpol with the task of initiating and organizing the said meetings in collaboration with UNICEF, IOM and ILO/IPEC;

16. Invite the international community to assist States, civil society and national non-governmental organization s in implementing these recommendations.

Yamoussoukro, 10 January 2002